



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

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July 30, 2001

The Honorable John D. Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Dingell:

The National Association of the Deaf (NAD), America's oldest and largest organization representing deaf and hard of hearing people, is pleased to indicate its support for HR 526, the Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001.

The NAD firmly believes that HR 526 is the right approach to a patient's bill of rights. We find the companion bill in the Senate, popularly known as McCain-Edwards, to be similarly appropriate and balanced. Both bills offer timely access to specialist care, continuity of care, and patient appeal procedures. Children and adults with disabilities who have private health insurance will receive important protections were these bills to become law.

As you know, access to quality health care is sometimes compromised for deaf and hard of hearing Americans when providers do not honor their obligations to provide necessary interpreters and translators. The NAD is particularly concerned about this issue, because our members repeatedly tell us of their struggles to secure interpreting services from physicians, hospitals and other health-care providers.

We oppose competing bills, which offer fewer protections and extend fewer rights to Americans who need access to health care.

If we can provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Bloch
Executive Director

cc: NAD Board of Directors